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# U.S. AIR FORCE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

K239.0512-952

General Jack J. Catton

19-20 July 1977



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United States Air Force  
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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HQ, USAFHRC  
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

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K239.0512-952

Interview

of

General Jack J. Catton

By

Dr James C. Hasdorff

Date: 19-20 July 1977

Location: Burbank, California

01070782

# ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

ACCESS GRANTED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

REMARKS/PURPOSE



## FOREWORD

One of the oldest and oft-used sources for reconstructing the past is the personal recollections of the individuals who were involved. While of great value, memoirs and oral interviews are primary source documents rather than finished history. The following pages are the personal remembrances of the interviewee and not the official opinion of the US Air Force Historical Program or of the Department of the Air Force. The Air Force has not verified the statements contained herein and does not assume any responsibility for their accuracy.

These pages are a transcript of an oral interview recorded on magnetic tape. Editorial notes and additions made by US Air Force historians have been enclosed in brackets. When feasible, first names, ranks, or titles have been provided. Only minor changes for the sake of clarity were made before the transcript was returned to the interviewee for final editing and approval. Readers must therefore remember that this is a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word.



KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, Gen Jack J. Catton, USAF (ret.), have this day participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with Dr. James C. Hasdorff, covering my best recollection of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the United States Air Force.

Understanding that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into the Archives of the Air Force to be used, as the security classification permits, by qualified historical researchers whose access has been determined to be in the best interest of the United States Air Force, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey and assign all right, title and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Office of Air Force History, acting on behalf of the United States of America, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs and assigns all ownership, right, title and interest therein to the donee subject only to the following restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

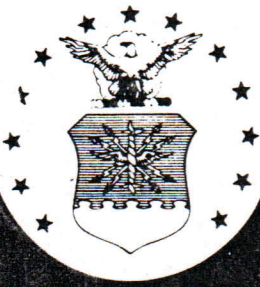
  
Dated 20 July 1977

Accepted on behalf of the

Office of Air Force History by: James C. Hasdorff

Dated 20 July 1977





# Biography

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION  
COMMAND SERVICES UNIT  
BOLLING AFB, D.C. 20332

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### GENERAL JACK J. CATTON

General Jack J. Catton commands the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) with headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The command's mission is to provide worldwide technical logistics support to all Air Force active and Reserve force activities, Military Assistance Program countries, and designated U.S. Government agencies.

General Catton was born in Berkeley, Calif., on Feb. 5, 1920. He attended Fairfax High School in Los Angeles, Santa Monica Jr. College and Loyola University in Los Angeles, Calif.

He entered the Army Air Corps in 1940 as a flying cadet and received pilot training at Santa Maria, Calif., and Randolph and Kelly Fields in Texas. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps in February 1941.

Early in World War II, General Catton served as an instructor pilot at Barksdale Field, La., and Hendricks Field, Fla., and as a squadron commander at Lockbourne Field, Ohio. He flew the first B-29 bomber across the Pacific to the Mariana Islands in 1944. While serving with the XXI Bomber Command he was awarded the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster for extraordinary achievement during combat missions against Japan.

In 1946 and 1947 General Catton took part in the first two atomic weapons tests in the Pacific. During this period, he also commanded the 65th Bombardment Squadron. In June 1948 he was assigned as Chief of the Policy Branch, Directorate of Plans, at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters, Andrews Air Force Base, Md. He moved with the command to Offutt Air Force Base, Nebr., as Chief of the Requirements Branch, Directorate of Plans. After a successful bout with polio, he went to March Air Force Base, Calif., in 1950 and served as Director of Operations for the 22d Bombardment Wing and later for the 12th Air Division until November 1951.

After flying combat missions against North Korea out of Japan for 90 days, General Catton went to Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., in February 1952 as Deputy Commander of the 92d Bombardment Wing. As commander, he later led the wing from Fairchild to Guam in the first test of B-36 aircraft





capabilities in sustained oversea operations. He then went to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., to command the 43d Bombardment Wing for a year. In June 1956 he returned to SAC headquarters for a tour of duty in the Directorate of Operations.

In November 1958 General Catton was selected Chief of Staff for the Eighth Air Force, Westover Air Force Base, Mass. When he assumed command of the 817th Air Division at Pease Air Force Base, N.H., in July 1959, he was the youngest brigadier general in the Air Force. Two years later he took command of the 822d Air Division, Turner Air Force Base, Ga., where he served one year prior to becoming Commander of the 823d Air Division at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla. In August 1963 he was named Commander of the 821st Strategic Aerospace Division at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S. Dak.

In February 1964 he was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force as Director of Operational Requirements, Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Requirements (later reorganized as Operational Requirements and Development Plans, Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development). During this period, he served as the Department of Defense representative and chairman of the National Committee for Clear Air Turbulance (NCCAT). In July 1966 he was transferred to the office of the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Resources as the Director of Aerospace Programs, with additional duties as chairman of the Air Staff Board. In August 1967 he became Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Resources.

General Catton took command of Fifteenth Air Force, March Air Force Base, Calif., in August 1968, and of the Military Airlift Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., the following August. In September 1972 he became the Commander of the Air Force Logistics Command with headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

He is a command pilot and has qualified in the C-5 Galaxy, C-141 Starlifter, C-9 Nightingale, all bombers from the B-17 through the B-52, KC-97 and KC-135 tankers, the F-4 fighter bomber and the HH-53 helicopter. In addition he has limited experience in many of the century series fighters, and has logged nearly 14,000 flying hours.

His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart.

General Catton is married to the former Jo Beth Nelson of Shreveport, La. They have three children: Jo Beth, married to Maj. Thomas W. Williams, USAF; Cheryl Lee, married to Maj. F. E. King, USAF; and Cadet Jack, Jr., U.S. Air Force Academy.



PERSONAL FACT SHEET - GENERAL JACK J. CATTON

A. Personal Data

1. Born - Feb. 5, 1920, Berkeley, Calif.; father - Thomas R. Catton (deceased); mother - Jane H. Malm.
2. Married - Jan. 14, 1942; wife - Jo Beth Nelson Catton; children - Jo Beth, Cheryl Lee and Jack J., Jr.
3. Hometown - Santa Monica, Calif.

B. Education

1. Graduate, Fairfax High School, Los Angeles, Calif., 1937.
2. Graduate, Santa Monica Junior College, Calif., 1939.
3. Attended, Loyola University (Law School), Los Angeles, Calif., 1939-1940.
4. Graduate, Pilot Training at Randolph and Kelly Flds., Tex., 1941.
5. Commanders' Class of the Air Force Manpower Management Training Program, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 1952.

C. Service

1. May 1940 - Feb 1941 Flying Cadet, Santa Maria, Calif.; Randolph and Kelly Fields, Tex.
2. Feb 1941 - Jan 1942 Plt. and Flying Instr., Barksdale Fld., La.
3. Jan 1942 - Feb 1943 Flying Instr., Hendricks Fld., Fla.
4. Feb 1943 - Apr 1944 Tng. Sq. Comdr., Lockbourne Fld., Ohio.
5. Apr 1944 - Sept 1945 Ops. & Tng. Stf. Off., 498th Bomb. Gp., XXI Bomb. Comd., Mariana Islands.
6. Sept 1945 - Jan 1946 Asst. CofS, Hq. 1st Staging Comd., Merced, Calif.
7. Jan 1946 - May 1946 Asst. Dir. of Tactics, 444th Bomb. Gp., Merced, Calif., & Roswell Fld., N. Mex.
8. May 1946 - July 1946 AC, Task Gp. 1.5 (Provisional); Kwajalein.
9. July 1946 - Aug 1946 Asgnd. to 393d Bomb. Sq., Roswell, N. Mex.
10. Aug 1946 - Nov 1947 Comdr., 65th Bomb. Sq., 444th Bomb. Gp., Davis-Monthan Fld., Ariz.
11. Nov 1947 - May 1948 Comdr., Task Unit 741, Project Sandstone, and Asst. CofS, Air Task Gp. 7, Kwajalein.
12. May 1948 - June 1948 Hq. 43d Bomb. Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
13. June 1948 - Nov 1948 Ch., Policy Br., and Ch., Programs Br., Directorate of Plans, Hq. SAC, Andrews AFB, Md.
14. Nov 1948 - July 1950 Ch., Rqmts. Br., Programs Sec., Directorate of Plans, Hq. SAC, Offutt AFB, Nebr.
15. July 1950 - Feb 1951 Dir., Ops. & Tng., 22d Bomb. Wg., March AFB, Calif.
16. Feb 1951 - Nov 1951 Dir. of Ops., 12th Air Div., March AFB, Calif.
17. Nov 1951 - Jan 1952 Dep. to CINCSAC, SAC Xray, FEAF, Japan.
18. Jan 1952 - Feb 1952 Dir. of Ops., 12th Air Div., March AFB, Calif.

19. Feb 1952 - July 1955 Dep. Comdr., 92d Bomb. Wg.; Comdr., 814th AB Gp., & 92d Bomb. Wg., Fairchild AFB, Wash.

20. July 1955 - June 1956 Comdr., 43d Bomb. Wg., Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

21. June 1956 - Nov 1958 Ch., Rqmts. Div., Directorate of Ops., Hq. SAC, Offutt AFB, Nebr.

22. Nov 1958 - July 1959 CofS, 8th AF, Westover AFB, Mass.

23. July 1959 - July 1961 Comdr., 817th Air Div., Pease AFB, N.H.

24. July 1961 - July 1962 Comdr., 822d Air Div., Turner AFB, Ga.

25. July 1962 - Aug 1963 Comdr., 823d Air Div., Homestead AFB, Fla.

26. Aug 1963 - Feb 1964 Comdr., 821st Strat. Aerospace Div., Ellsworth AFB, S. Dak.

27. Feb 1964 - Mar 1965 Dir. of Opl. Req., DCS/P&R, Hq. USAF, Washington, D.C.

28. Mar 1965 - July 1966 Dir. of Opl. Req. & Dev. Plans, DCS/R&D, Hq. USAF, Washington, D.C.

29. July 1966 - Aug 1967 Dir. of Aerospace Prgms., DCS/P&O, Hq. USAF, Washington, D.C.

30. Aug 1967 - July 1968 DCS/P&R, Hq. USAF, Washington, D.C.

31. Aug 1968 - July 1969 Comdr., 15th AF, March AFB, Calif.

32. Aug 1969 - Sept 1972 Comdr., MAC, Scott AFB, Ill.

33. Sept 1972 - Present Commander, Air Force Logistics Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

D. Decorations and Service Awards

Distinguished Service Medal w/1 oak leaf cluster	Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/3 service stars
Legion of Merit w/1 oak leaf cluster	World War II Victory Medal
Distinguished Flying Cross w/1 oak leaf cluster	National Defense Service Medal w/1 service star
Purple Heart	Korean Service Medal w/1 service star
Air Medal w/3 oak leaf clusters	Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon w/6 oak leaf clusters
Army Commendation Medal	United Nations Service Medal w/1 service star
American Defense Service Medal	
American Campaign Medal	

E. Effective Dates of Promotion

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Temporary</u>	<u>Permanent</u>
2d Lt		Feb 5, 1941
1st Lt	Feb 1, 1942	July 5, 1946
Capt	Feb 26, 1942	
Maj	Aug 19, 1943	Sept 3, 1948
Lt Col	May 28, 1945	July 12, 1951
Col	Jan 19, 1951	July 1, 1958
Brig Gen	Aug 1, 1959	Jan 30, 1962
Maj Gen	May 16, 1963	Apr 30, 1965
Lt Gen	Aug 1, 1967	
General	Aug 1, 1969	

(Date of rank August 1, 1969)



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very few of them. We, of course, had to get all of that work done before we could equip and train and go. So it took awhile to develop SAC, and it took a lot of resources. But its relationship to the 70-wing program didn't give me that much concern.

H: What effect do you think this would have had on the Korean war if they had left the 70 wings intact?

C: I don't think that we suffered from lack of forces in Korea, do you?

H: Oh, I think initially we had problems.

C: We had to get there. We did have a large recall program for people, so I guess you could say that our response early on could have been more effective if we had had a larger military establishment like a 70-group or 70-wing Air Force. So sure, even with those kinds of forces, we may have had far more of a force garrisoned in Japan or in Okinawa, or even in Korea itself. Right, I am sure that if we had had a larger military force, we would have responded much more quickly and much more effectively.

H: Well, we also had to speed up our production and research as far as the jet fighter was concerned. You know, we had that moved way up.

C: Well, from that, of course, came the F-100. It was born right out there just about when we started with F-80s and the straight wing F-84s; finally we got the swept wing F-84s, and



eventually we got the beautiful F-86s. Our response was awfully quick by today's measure. I guess you could say had we had a larger standing force that Korea would have been a far different story.

H: You also were involved in ultra long-range maneuvers using the B-36. Could you describe with a little detail one of these maneuvers and what the objectives were and so forth?

C: Yes. This is right around the time of Korea, of course, and a personal thing that I think is important to my story, at any rate, it is going to be a little while until I get to the B-36 response. Back in 1949, when we had moved the headquarters to Omaha, when we had made our case for priority, when we had developed our programming plan for building SAC's capability, when all of these things had come together in the fall of that year (on Labor Day, as a matter of fact), I was still working pretty hard and so on--I contracted polio when I was at Offutt AFB, Labor Day of 1949. Twenty-nine years old with a great future ahead of me, I thought. Boy! I'll tell you, I got awfully sick. Here is another thing that the Air Force has to take a great deal of credit for; I could not have had better care. I was sent to the county hospital as soon as they took the spinal and found the bug. I was in quarantine for 2 weeks and that sort of thing. The Air Force's response to this was absolutely indescribable. General LeMay was over at my house, General Power called my folks to get my mother out to Offutt. Those hard "iron ass" people, you know, wow! They just couldn't have been more responsive than they were. At any rate, I had bulbar polio; I had quite an involvement in my lower extremities, abdominal, and my right leg in particular. So



after I got rid of the bug, the fever was gone and all that sort of thing, that is when you assess the damage done to your body. I had a tough time of it. I, of course, was never going to fly again. Hopefully, I could stay on active duty. That was the kind of an outlook you had. I would not accept that though because I couldn't believe that I would never get my strength back. But at any rate, I had a physical therapist who was a reserve nurse in the area. She worked with me for nearly a year, certainly extensively for the first 6 months of my recovery. The whole point of this is that I was able to get back to work in a period of about 2 months. I started flying--we called them link trainers then, you know, simulators--just to do that sort of thing. I was still on crutches and was having a real tough time; couldn't walk upstairs, for example, and things like that for a long, long time. But Cam Sweeney and General LeMay and others saw to it that I was extremely busy. They really laid the work on me and eventually, about 3 months after contracting the disease, I was given a check ride in a B-29; we had selected one with Curtiss electronic props. You could reverse the props and you could ground control the airplane nicely without using brakes--I could not get movement with my right leg to use brakes. Anyway, they went through the thing of giving me a check ride with the flight surgeon in the bombardier's seat; Dick Lassiter was the check pilot, and 411 was the airplane. They checked me out and put me on what they called limited flying status. I am not even sure there is such a thing, but under the authority available to a senior commander like General LeMay, he with the advice of his surgeon, put me back on flying status. The limited flying status meant that I could not fly alone, that I could not fly any airplane at anytime without a qualified



instructor pilot with me. I flew like that for a year. I wanted to tell you that because in this day and time, and probably properly so, there would be no way for me to get back on flying status or even to stay on active duty. As it turns out, those men saw that I might have a future that was important to the Air Force. They put their necks out a little bit and assumed some responsibility to see that I had that opportunity, or perhaps the Air Force had a chance to exploit whatever I had been able to learn. So you have to put that away. It is not something I would recommend, of course, but I did fly for 25 more years. Although I certainly had some shortcomings physically, none of them really affected my ability to fly and to lead people. So we have to give men like General LeMay credit for those kinds of things.

H: Well, do you think that you were burning your candle on both ends, so to speak, too much at the time, and that lowered your resistance?

C: I think that is without a question. The only reason I got polio is because the bug was around and my resistance was very low. As I remember it, we were flying A-26s. We call them B-26s now, but the Douglas B-26 was the airplane we were using to move around, to get back and forth. I had been travelling all of that week, you know, kind of flying between places at night and working all day. So on Labor Day weekend, we kind of let it all out; had a nice party Friday night and a big party Saturday night. I guess I just didn't get much sleep for about a week and had been working hard. But, hell, I was a young, strong 29-year-old kid, really good physically. Well, obviously my resistance must have been low



at that particular time. Boy! When I got that headache and backache, I did not understand what could be wrong with me. I remember that Labor Day morning I went out and played 18 holes of golf. When I got home, I was really in trouble. The headache was just something like I had never experienced before, the back was hurting, and I couldn't function, I couldn't urinate. When I realized that, I just called my wife and said, "Honey, call the hospital and tell them to send an ambulance." I told her, "I think I have polio." So, boom, out we go, bang the spinal, and that's right! But the Air Force's response to it was just fantastic. I am a guy who absolutely loves not only my country, but I love the Air Force so genuinely and so completely that I can't describe it. Tremendous experience. I am very, very lucky to have had it.

H: Getting back to the B-36 long-range thing again.

C: Okay, well here comes Korea. We had just made an arrangement between Rosie O'Donnell and Cam Sweeney for me to trade assignments with Colonel Payne Jennings, Pete Jennings, who was Operations Officer of the division at March AFB under Rosie O'Donnell's 15AF. We just about had this thing in motion; the object being that I could be outside with lots of sunshine and be able to continue my walking exercise all year long, rather than be in Omaha with all that snow. It was a sympathetic kind of thing. It was all set and were actually making the transfer when the Korean war broke out. I continued out to California en route to March AFB, but Pete Jennings was gone, right off. He was immediately transferred to the FEAF and was given command of the 19th Wing located on Okinawa. So having been transferred from



you cannot have freedom without security. No way to have freedom without security. So if you really believe that, then shouldn't you be willing to invest the right amount of your national treasure to provide for security? Sure you should. So I think those are the kinds of discussions that need to get to the public. Let us talk more basically and more fundamentally, more philosophically. Not abstractly, but philosophically and fundamentally. What in the world are you talking about? We are not talking about how many main battle tanks we need in next year's budget. That is a consequence, that is not the driver. Yes, I think the main thing to get before the public, so that they would have an appreciation of our military people, is for them to understand the broad, basic reasons why a military is necessary and then once you make that point, then I think you can get more into the detail. But I remember when Dave Jones [Gen David C.] took over as Chief of the Air Force, just before I retired. He made the remark that he was amazed when he sat down with a bunch of media people--I guess it was his first press conference or something after becoming Chief--and one of the questions he was asked was, "General Jones, why do we need an Air Force?" Boy, that really put him on his heels, you know. But it is that kind of question that a lot of people need to have explained to them. Why a military, what is it all about? Apparently, we forget some of those things.

H: During your tenure, the infamous Travis riots took place, as you probably well recall. At any rate, in an Air Force Times article by Tony McHale, he quoted you as saying that, "impersonality, insensitivity, and indifference at the supervisory level and the invisibility of squadron command



are causes," for the incident at Travis. Could you elaborate a bit on exactly what conditions were like at Travis that led you to this conclusion?

C: Well, first let me say that I think we learned a lesson at Travis for a price that was really right. We did not have anybody seriously hurt; we were able to bring things under control. But the lessons we learned from that incident were tremendous. We had, I am sure, based on my own experience and it would go across the board, at about that time I think we in the Air Force thought, "yes, there are racial problems in the country, but, you know, we do not have any segregation problems in the Air Force. We do not discriminate in the Air Force." You could tell yourself that and be pretty convincing. Therefore, you were not sensitive to the fact that, by God, there was discrimination in the Air Force and indirect segregation; there was animosity, there was lack of understanding. There just isn't any question about it. And that is what we learned from the Travis incident. Now at Travis we had just about a perfect setup for a racial problem because we had a very large terminal, both a passenger terminal and a cargo terminal, a tremendous number of transients going in and out, thousands of transients going in and out of Travis all the time. We had a very large and very busy airlift wing, the 60th Airlift Wing, operating out of Travis. The organizations which resided, the permanent residents of Travis, were part of that 60th Wing and they were very large. For example, your organizational maintenance squadron was running like 1,100 people or something like that. The field maintenance squadron maybe is 900, the transportation squadron is 1,250. Numbers are not important, just the fact that they were very, very large. In



the Air Force we had come to the point where we did not provide the kind of supervision of the non-work part of Air Force life that we should have because, even if it was a thousand-man outfit, you still had a first sergeant and one or two clerks, and that's all you had. And you said to yourself, "Well, fine, the guy who is in the shop is going to take care of his guys," and so on. In other words, the supervisor at the working level would be the man who would see that these young men, these Air Force people, were properly behaved and maintained the proper standards, and everything was going fine. Well, I think we were far overconfident of what the situation actually was. So, yes, I think the blacks, particularly, suffered extensively from bias even though it was not an apparent thing at all. But even if they didn't, the fact that they were convinced that they did was important and the sensitivity, the understanding, the empathy of the majority of the minority's problems just were totally inadequate. As a consequence we had a problem at Travis, and thank God we did because I think the results of that incident changed demonstrably the Air Force and very quickly. It changed the DOD very significantly. General Bill Moore [William G., Jr.] who now commands MAC, was the senior officer out there when that Travis report was written by the investigation group that we put on it. Backing up a little bit, when the incident occurred the question was, who do we send? What do we do? What is our response? I talked with John Meyer [Gen John C.] who was the Vice Chief of the Air Force at the time, and he said, "What kind of help can I give you? What do you think we ought to do?" And I said, "John, I think we ought to let the man on the scene handle it for now. If we get help from the Air Force Headquarters or even from my headquarters in



the form of senior officers, I think we will have everybody from the DOD down there, and from the Department of Justice and various other places and that's the kind of help we really don't need. I have a great commander out there. Let me give him the job, and when he needs help, I will tell him to holler." So, we gave Bill Moore the job. I kept in constant contact with him. I didn't even go out there until about the third day, just so it would not be given the significance that would have made it uncontrollable. I think you have witnessed that the more attention you give certain dissenting activities the more dissension you create, right? So at any rate, Bill Moore did a super job out there bringing things under control. We were able to really get down to all of the causes and all of the consequences through a nonemotional, very careful and deliberate investigation that we conducted. We wrote a very comprehensive report. We had a list of recommendations and how they should be carried out. We accomplished or executed those that we thought were right and within our own authority. We gave the rest to the Air Staff. The Air Staff gave them to the DOD and soon there were things like--what did we call them? What did we call the program?

H: Race Relations?

C: Race Relations. That wasn't the term I was thinking of.

H: Human Relations they call it now.

C: Human Relations is the broad term but we always had those, you know. The Social Actions Program is what they came to be and, boy, I'll tell you, the whole nature of the minority



problems in the Air Force literally changed as a consequence of that incident. I will never forget going out and talking to a whole theater full of supervisors, NCOs, and first-line supervisors. About 500 of them, I guess. A 500-man theater, it had to be 500. We really had a talk, I will tell you that, and we laid it all out right there. I guess I talked for about 20 minutes, told them what I thought, told them what we were going to do, told them what was expected of them, and made it very, very clear that anyplace we found discrimination or bias--and we were going to look, and they were going to help us look--that man was going to be removed. It had to be that way. We all got together pretty fast, I think. So therein lay another experience, but you never can be too sure of yourself. You never can be complacent when you are dealing with people who have an important mission. You really have to be sensitive, you have to be out among them, you have to communicate, you have to listen as well as talk. And when you listen you have to understand what they are saying. If you understand it, then you have to be sympathetic or you are not communicating. You have to have empathy or the communication is useless, and we talked a lot about that.

H: Your remarks regarding General Moore are interesting since we have an oral history interview with the Base Commander at Travis during that time, a Colonel John Blake. During the initial phase of the unrest at the base he mentioned that General Moore "came in and he should have stayed away because it might have ended here." Well, this is kind of in opposition to what you just mentioned.

C: Well, it is in a way and in another way it isn't. You see, John Blake, I think, thought he could handle it. But that



the appearance of General Moore added importance to the event, and the fact that it added importance to the event caused John Blake to feel like it exacerbated the situation rather than contained it. John might be right. I think to the extent that the incident developed, it was capped at just about the right level.

H: Well, his feeling was that General Moore's negotiations prolonged the situation at the particular time that was crucial. John Blake felt he could have nipped it in the bud; but just by prolonging the situation, it irritated it and then things really got out of hand. He felt that if he could have had the control he should have had that he could have done something. That was another thing John Blake got into that I will mention in a minute, the fact that a base commander in the present-day Air Force is completely denuded of any responsibility.

C: I sympathize with what John Blake has to say, and he may be quite right. I would have no way of judging that because I wasn't there. By the time I was notified, things had advanced to the fact that Bill Moore was on the scene. So, I don't know. John might well be right, but now that we have successfully come out of that situation, I am pleased that it did advance to the state it did. What I am saying is, we were terribly fortunate that we had such an incident occur to the extreme it did without going beyond. Because it did reach the extent it did, we were able to respond very meaningfully and lastingly to a problem that damn well existed that we did not properly understand nor did we actually identify.

H: Well, the Travis Riot has been described by some as a racial confrontation and by others as just a matter of youth



rebellious against rank or authority. How did you see that situation?

C: Without any question, it was a combination of both. One is certainly in support of the other. No question about it.

H: Colonel Blake noted that over the past few years, "I am convinced that being black is an advantage to promotion. There isn't any question about it. We are promoting black officers now that are two grades beyond their competence level, in my judgment, for the sole purpose of being able to say that we have an appropriate number of blacks promoted." How do you view that statement?

C: I view that as a misunderstanding of what the facts really are. Unfortunately, John Blake would not have been in a position to have sat on many promotion boards. I am talking about officer promotion boards. Perhaps he sat on a few, but having been on many because of my age and experience, I guess you could say, no, that is not true. I would say this in deference to what John saw, that if everything else is equal, totally equal, yes, you would probably lean on the side of the minority; everything else being equal. If you wanted to carry that a little bit further, you might make things equal when they really were not because you wanted to give deference or give an advantage to the minority. But I think it is better described that if the guy is fully qualified and if he has the potential that is just about the same as other competitors, if you had ten guys who were equal, you would take the black guy or the Chicano or whatever the minority guy happened to be. I think that is right, but I do not think there is backlash discrimination beyond that.



H: Colonel Blake also noted that, "We went overboard in the race relations business, and we are still overboard in my judgment. Eighteen hours each year, hearing the same plight, dashed around five or six different ways with a new group of people, implying by innuendo that we have been unfair to them over the centuries. That we should now realize the errors of our ways and atone for this is a bunch of crap in my opinion because I don't think any black who has any brains at all has any trouble getting ahead in the military service." Do you feel that we have gone overboard in this regard?

C: Well, no, I don't think we have gone overboard. If we have done anything, we have overreacted, but I would say to a very minimum extent. If we have done anything, we have overreacted, but I think that is a justifiable and proper thing to do. You just don't want to try to correct in a way that won't get the job done. It is sort of like putting enough force against the objective. Yes, I am sure we have overreacted, but within very tolerable limits.

H: In the Airman magazine in August 1970, you noted that, "You need two things for a successful deployment. MAC has both, reliability and speed." Well, owing to the tremendous budget cuts that MAC experienced during your tenure as Commander, do you feel either of these were sacrificed?

C: The only thing that we sacrificed after the war--I am talking about Southeast Asia now--we sacrificed the monies required for the effective use of the peacetime capability that MAC represents. In other words, we were not utilizing the force to the extent that its response for contingencies, like a great surge in activity, was as dependable as I would like for it to have been. For example, if we are going to go to